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R U R A L D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L

A N N U A L R E P O R T

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M E D I C A L O F F I C E R

O F H E A L T H

F O R T H E Y E A R 1965

M E M B E R S O F T H E C O U N C I L

Y E A R 1 9 6 5

Chairman: Alderman E. T. Kinsey Morgan, J.P.

Vice-Chairman: R. P. L. Hughes, C.C.

Councillors

Abbeycwmhir:	F. P. Hamer; A. R. Lewis;
Cefnlllys Rural:	J. T. L. Price, (Died January, 1966)
Llanbadarn Fawr:	I. J. Lewis; R. T. Knill, C.C..
Llanfylltffraid Cwmdeuddwr:	Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis; C.B., O. B. E., V. Lewis; W. Scott, J.P; J. D. Williams,
Llanyre:	S. E. Lloyd; W. A. Probert,
Nantmel:	R. E. P. Jones; A. E. Oakley. I. Thomas;
Rhayader:	R. P. L. Hughes, C.C., G. D. Morgan, C.C..
St. Harmon:	D. H. Bound; Ald. E. T. K. Morgan, J.P..
Llanfihangel Helygen	J. D. A. Thompson.

Committees

Public Health and Housing: All members of the Council.
Chairman: G. D. Morgan, C.C; Vice-Chairman: V. Lewis.
Finance and Rating: All members of the Council.
Chairman: Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E.,
Vice-Chairman: J. T. L. Price

Medical Officer of Health

JOHN DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch., B.Sc.,
(Medical Practitioner and Part-Time M.O.H.)
Telephone: Rhayader 231

Public Health Inspector

G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I..
(Certs. S.I.E.J.B. and Meat and Foods of R. S. H.)

Council Offices

Dolgerddon Hall, Rhayader.

Telephone Rhayader 355

BRYNCOED,
RHAYADER.

1st November, 1966

Sirs,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report for the year 1965.

The past year has seen the completion of the new home for ten old people as part of the new council estate, which includes a group of twelve bungalows for a similar but less handicapped age group. By design, these allow their occupants to remain an integral part of the community and not live in isolation. This object will no doubt be achieved with the passage of time as a community spirit develops.

Council's progressive attitude towards encouraging new industry to the town and providing housing for key workers has brought its dividend, in that Rhayader has been chosen to act as a pilot scheme for the development of selected towns in Central Wales.

There is a danger in the slow expansion of an existing town that attention will be concentrated on the key factors of housing and employment (of which one hopes there will be a diversity) and allow the social amenities to fade into the background or even to believe that they already exist in abundance. Newcomers, as do holidaymakers, will come to find out that the benefits of an advanced country are not universally enjoyed and at the present time there are obvious disappointing factors.

The lack of public transport adds considerably to the difficulties of attending at hospital clinics, visiting inpatients, or enjoying the amenities of neighbouring towns, and without a car there is no easy access to a cinema.

The cost of living is marginally higher here to quote bread and milk as two basic examples, and this affects a section of the community whose wage is lower than the national average.

The nearest indoor swimming pool is 41 miles away; the county itself being unfortunate enough not to possess one; the library is inadequately housed; school children have comparatively long distances to travel to their secondary education; a single television channel only is available, and a proportion of that is devoted to a language which is unintelligible to the vast majority of local residents.

These problems are not peculiar to Rhayader nor indeed can they be solved by Rhayader alone, as they are primarily the effects of geography and sparseness of population.

That they exist as disadvantages for some and perhaps, in the future, for increasing numbers is worthy of Council's consideration in the long term development of the town, if discontent also is not to mature.

The health of the community remained satisfactory throughout the year and there was no widespread incidence of serious illness.

1965 was the last complete year in which Council were responsible for the water supplies and this burden has now passed to the newly formed Radnorshire and North Breconshire Water Board. There have been major improvements in the district's water supplies in recent years and much hard work has been put into this by the Surveyor and his department. Great credit is due to him for these achievements.

I wish to thank you and all members of the Council staff for help given to me throughout the year.

I am specially grateful to the Public Health Inspector for his good services to this community and for his preparation of this report.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN DAVIES.

G E N E R A L S T A T I S T I C S

				1964	1965
Area of District	..	..	..	91,240 acres	
Estimated Population	..	..	..	4,110	4,090
Number of Inhabited Houses					
In Parishes					
Abbeycwmhir	..	..	..	69	71
Cefnlllys Rural	..	..	..	23	25
Llanbadarn Fawr	..	..	..	162	175
Llanfihangel Helygen		..	..	15	14
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr		..	..	156	161
Llanyre (Rural Ward)		..	..	78	88
Llanyre (Village Ward)		..	..	134	137
Nantmel	..	..	..	199	200
Rhayader	..	..	..	344	369
St. Harmon	..	..	..	142	142
				<u>1,322</u>	<u>1,382</u>
				<u><u>1,322</u></u>	<u><u>1,382</u></u>

Total includes six residential caravans

Rateable Value	..	..	£172,507
Product of Penny Rate	..	..	£691

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Rhayader in area and in population is the largest district within the County, its nearest rival in size being Knighton, an area of 88,872 acres and its nearest rival in population is Llandrindod Wells with 3,200 persons.

The town of Rhayader itself lies in the Western boundary of Radnorshire and is the first town of any size on the banks of the Wye. Its natural boundary is up the River Wye to its confluence with the Elan; up the River Elan; diverging west up the Claerwen Valley; it runs up the source of the latter river and over the mountains to the River Ithon, with some diversions, and partially encircles Llandrindod Wells.

The largest parish of the district is that of Cwmdeuddwr, with an area of 32,172 acres. The parish boundary runs up the Elan and Claerwen valleys, forming the Breconshire boundary, ~~skirts~~ the boundaries of Cardigan-shire and Montgomery and returns down the Wye. This parish is largely up-land over 1,000 feet, is largely uninhabited and uninhabitable and the bulk is given over to the water shed of the Birmingham Corporation Water Department. The combination of these rivers and beautiful mountains, together with the extensive lakes, makes this an area of outstanding natural beauty, nor is this the only beautiful spot in the district. These factors are vital to the development of one industry - that of tourism.

Quiet and wet in winter, the first sunny weekend after Easter, brings visitors from all over the country rushing up the valleys. Such a phenomenon cannot fail to leave some mark on the countryside - quite apart from litter. Many of the more remote roads have been improved, opening the mountains still further and enabling motorists to progress even farther in their search for the unusual and it is no longer a source of astonishment to see a party of the more venturesome youths riding bicycles 1,400 feet up in the heather or help to dig out a car bedded in a track suitable only for ponies.

Whilst the uncertain weather of the British Isles will always be a deterrent to some as a venue for their annual holidays, nevertheless this increasing interest is having its effect. There is a greater awareness of the potential of this trade and the Council, who have become more progressive in their attitude as the years advance, have not been slow to accept this challenge. They have established a caravan park so successfully that they now contemplate an extension to almost treble its capacity. They purchased 21 acres of prime agriculture land near the centre of the town to preserve as an open space. During the summer this was let to the Pony Trekking Association, enabling this body to become established and there were occasions during 1965 when no less than 70 ponies were out on trekk. Thus, 1965, in spite of the heavy rainfall, was a boom year for tourists and everything points to an even better position in the years to come.

One tourist potential, which although increasing, has not been fully exploited is that of angling. The many rivers, lakes and streams make this an area ideal for game fishermen. Birmingham Corporation Water Department have tried to make this more attractive by a heavy restocking programme which is having its effect.

The Local Angling Association control a large amount of the waters outside the water shed, they are also making their contribution to this trade and the number of visitors are ever increasing. Yet this is bringing its own dangers and the prices of water have become so high that syndicates and firms are eager to snap up any fishing which becomes available. This danger is not confined to Rhayader and approaches have been made by other Associations and bodies to the Central Government to help preserve these welsh rivers for everyone and not just a selected section of the community.

The direct effect of this increase in tourism is the amount of part-time work available in summer, especially for women, and this cannot fail to have its effect on the economy and on the standard of living. The indirect effects are to be seen in housing. No longer is the poor house so attractive and the slum clearance programme looks as if it will almost solve itself with very little prodding as people afford, and demand, better accommodation.

The exploitation of the natural resouces is thus reflecting itself on social conditions.

The Council, however, have not stopped here. Their enlightened attitude induced them to purchase land for industrial development some years ago. They also accepted the axiom that housing must be available, if not in advance, then at least concurrent with the development of industry. This they did with a site for forty seven units, all of very advanced thinking in Rhayader, with additional housing at Llanyre and Crossgates. They are now aware that as the local industries established on this site will undoubtedly raise living standards still further, there will be a demand for housing sites for owner-occupation. The next logical step is to develop sites for sale and this is being actively considered. Such a move will have several advantages from the Council's point of view. It will provide houses without any loss to the housing revenue and this will in turn offset the increase in rents as houses are built during times of rising costs. At the same time, it will help to preserve a balanced community, for at the moment several persons of executive level have to move out of the town because of the lack of suitable accommodation or land for sale. This attitude will also undoubtedly stimulate owners of private land. For too long, there have been considerable areas suitable for housing, tied up by owners diffident about making the first moves for development.

These steps cannot fail to have some effect on the problem of depopulation, nor will the improvements be confined to the town of Rhayader itself for the ripples of a better economy will inevitably spread to the surrounding parishes.

The run down of the motor accessory factory made available a number of people trained as machine operators. This was important, for one of the industries established on the new industrial site is making precision planetary gear boxes of advanced design for industry. This requires very precise skills and a number of trained staff were introduced. Other locals however, trained elsewhere, have returned and of even greater importance has been the opportunities now open for school leavers. The steady development of this project will also help to reduce one of the most vicious aspects of depopulation, that of 'brain drain' for the more advanced school leaver has, in the past always had to leave the area. The future for Rhayader is therefore exciting and the message is clearly understood by the Council.

It remains to be seen what effect the influx of strangers with the new industries will have on local characteristics and habits. There must, inevitably be a period of 'shaking down' when forbearance and patience will be needed by 'old and new', and already several enquiries have been made as to the date of the next Council elections! However, Rhayader has had this happen in the past and there are today families left here from the building of the Claerwen dam and further back, from the construction of the original dams, and these should soon settle down and contribute to Rhayader's social life.

One fortunate natural condition is that the town itself lies just on the edge of the rain shadow area of the mountains to the West. That this is so, can be seen from the figures for 1965. In this it will be seen that the rainfall in December was a fantastic amount of 11.45 inches. However, some gauges in the watershed area of the Corporation showed over 20 inches during this same period.

			Rhayader 1964		Rhayader 1965
January	...	...	6.96 ins.	..	7.35 ins.
February	...	...	4.57 "	..	0.40 "
March	...	...	5.85 "	..	3.90 "
April	...	...	3.66 "	..	8.35 "
May	...	...	3.65 "	..	3.90 "
June	...	...	3.50 "	..	3.45 "
July	...	...	1.09 "	..	3.26 "
August	...	...	3.26 "	..	2.98 "
September	...	...	3.15 "	..	5.01 "
October	...	...	2.29 "	..	2.60 "
November	...	...	8.21 "	..	4.50 "
December	...	...	2.43 "	..	11.45 "
			<u>48.62 ins.</u>		<u>57.15 ins.</u>

Average over the previous 15 years, that is the long average, (1950 - 1964), was 48.71 inches. Therefore the rainfall in 1965 expressed as a percentage of the long average was 117.3% or approaching one fifth above normal. During the same period the rainfall at Kew, always about half the figure for the rain which falls on the west, was 24.51 ins. or 111.5% of their average.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by a Medical Officer of Health, an Engineer and Surveyor, and a Public Health Inspector. A rodent Operative is shared with Knighton Rural District Council.

Bacteriological analyses of water are undertaken by the Public Health Service, Shrewsbury, and chemical analyses by the Public Analyst, Carmarthen.

Infant Welfare Clinics are held monthly at Rhayader, and Newbridge-on-Wye. A new Clinic is in the process of being constructed at Rhayader and this will improve facilities here greatly.

Work is also proceeding on an Old People's Home in Rhayader on the New Housing Estate. This appears to be unique as this site development is the result of co-operation between the District and County Council. At the same time, the site envisages 12 old persons bungalows which will be grouped with and have a close affinity with the County Council Home.

There are hospital outpatient facilities at Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Hereford, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and at hospitals farther afield.

The Nursing Services are administered by the Radnorshire County Council. There has been a slight run down in the number of nurses actually resident in the district and there are now only two, the rest of the area being covered from outside the district. This nursing service is augmented by a health visitor who specialises in the health of the old and the young.

The ambulance service is provided by the County Council, but the drivers and attendants are all voluntary members of the local St. John Brigade. This arrangement appears to work well and the St. John Brigade is very lively and active in the district. The local knowledge of the personnel no doubt contributes to the avoidance of the delays which might otherwise arise from a central service in a sparsely populated area.

One effect of the centralisation of hospital services which perhaps is not receiving enough attention is the difficulty of distance for patients' family. The nearest hospital, Aberystwyth, is 35 miles away and the round trip to visit relatives can be expensive and trying, especially in winter, and this is aggravated by the total absence of any convenient public transport service.

This factor, however, must be weighed against the other real advantages of the specialised services which central hospitals can provide and perhaps the real answer lies in a liaison service to enable persons to share private transport.

The 'Meals on Wheels' service inaugurated in 1964 appears to be continuing.

VITAL STATISTICS

The object of giving Vital Statistics in a report of this kind is that they can be compared with the figures for other comparable areas and for the country as a whole. The study of these figures can give interesting readings to statisticians and can often lead to detection of some weakness in either social conditions or in public health.

Unfortunately when these figures are extremely low, as they must be in a low populated area, they have to be read carefully since in some cases an increase of one can mean the rate goes up by 50%. This is patently absurd but by studying the figures for a number of years then a truer picture can be formed.

Live Births

			<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>
Male - Legitimate	..	..	31	29
Illegitimate	..	..	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	..		<u>33</u>	<u>29</u>
Female - Legitimate	..	..	33	25
Illegitimate			<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	..		<u>34</u>	<u>28</u>
TOTALS			<u>67</u>	<u>57</u>
Rate for 1,000 Population (corrected)			18.91	16.37
Rate for England and Wales (approx)			18.1	18.0

Illegitimate Live Births

Per cent of total live births	4.5%	5.1%
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Still Births

Male - Legitimate	NIL	NIL
Illegitimate	NIL	NIL
Female - Legitimate	NIL	NIL
Illegitimate	NIL	NIL
TOTAL	<u>NIL</u>	<u>NIL</u>
Rate per 1,000 live and still births	<u>NIL</u>	<u>NIL</u>
Rate for England and Wales		17.3

This figure of course exemplifies the absurdity of statistics when small numbers are concerned and it is therefore necessary to take totals for the past seventeen years to get any sort of picture at all. These are as follows:-

	Still Births	Total (Still and Live)	Rate per 1,000
1965	NIL	57	NIL
1959 - 1964	12	394	16.37
1954 - 1958	6	314	19.13
1949 - 1953	12	316	37.9
1949 - 1965	30	1,081	27.7

When compared with the rate for England and Wales in previous years it seems to indicate that the number of still births in this area was higher than the national average, but that the tendency seems to be correcting itself.

Total Live and Still Births

	Still	Live	Total
Male - Legitimate	NIL	29	29
Illegitimate	NIL	NIL	NIL
Female - Legitimate	NIL	25	25
Illegitimate	NIL	3	3
	<u>NIL</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>57</u>

Infant Deaths

	One year	Under 4 weeks	1 week
Males - legitimate	1	1	1
Illegitimate	NIL	NIL	NIL
Females - Legitimate	NIL	NIL	NIL
Illegitimate	NIL	NIL	NIL
TOTALS	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

Infant Mortality Rates

Total Infant Deaths per 1,000 births	17.5
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate births	17.5
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate births	NIL

Neo Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under four weeks per 1,000 live births	17.5
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Early Neo Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under one week per 1,000 live births	17.5
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Perinatal Mortality Rate

Still Births and deaths under one week combined per 1,000 live and still births	17.5
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Maternal Mortality

NIL

Births and Deaths compared

	Births	Deaths	Corrected rates per 1,000 population	
			Births	Deaths
1965	57	38	16.37	8.9
1964	67	50	18.91	11.44
1955-64	63.6	53.4	18.89	12.1

Rate for England and Wales 1965

Births 18.0

Deaths 11.5

Last year a comment was made that in the previous 16 years, the natural increase i.e. the excess births over deaths, was 110 but that in the same time the population had fallen by 588, a total decrease of 698 persons. However, the population figure given for 1965, that of 4,090 does show an increase over the figures of the past few years. These however are mid-year estimates and by the end of the year, a considerable number of people had been brought into the area as a result of setting up the local industries.

In previous years too, the hope was expressed that the population would stabilise itself. This it seems to be doing and there is every hope that Rhayader is on the verge of a prosperity boom which could restore it to its previous level of population, which used to stand at around 4,500. In fact this fall was fairly constant until it began to recover about 1961/62.

Causes of Death

In the following tables the figures show no deaths from lung cancer. This should not be viewed with too much optimism because as already commented, figures of this type are of not much significance unless taken over a considerable period.

However, it is worthy of comment that the bulk of the deaths are taking place at seventy-five and over.

For the benefit of the new members of the Council, it should be pointed out that because of the drift away of population there is a comparative shortage of people of marriageable age and a superabundance of old people. Because of this the birth rate and the death rate are multiplied by comparability factors which are designed to take these matters into account. Thus in our case, the births are multiplied by 1.16 and the deaths by 0.96, the object being that fair comparisons can be made with other districts.

Causes of Deaths

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	-	2
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	1	4
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	5	3
Coronary Disease, Angina	3	2
Hypertension with heart disease	-	1
Other Heart Disease	1	4
Other Circulatory Disease	-	2
Pneumonia	1	-
Other Defined and Illdefined Diseases	1	3
Motor Vehicle Accidents	1	-
All Other Accidents	1	2
Homicide and Operations of War	1	-
TOTALS	<u>15</u>	<u>23</u>

Deaths in Age Groups

Under four weeks	1	-
Fifteen Years plus	-	1
Twenty-five plus	-	1
Forty-five plus	-	1
Fifty-five plus	1	1
Sixty-five plus	6	5
Seventy-five years plus	7	14

Infectious Diseases

There were no epidemics of infectious diseases during the year, and notifications were as follows:-

Measles	..	..	4
Meningococcal Septicaemia and Meningitis	..	..	1

Tuberculosis

	Male	Female
Number of cases notified	-	2
Number of cases on register:		
Pulmonary	4	2
Non-pulmonary	4	4

National Assistance Act, 1948 - Section 46

This Section of the Act gives power to remove persons who are in need of care and attention to institutions.

No action was necessary during the year.

Common Lodging Houses

The circular from the Welsh Board of Health asks for particulars of common lodging houses in the district. In a rural area such as this, there are none.

HOUSING

A comment was made in 1964 that due to the proposed housing scheme it seemed that there would be a large number of houses available in Rhayader, and Llanyre with some more at Crossgates. These did in fact become available at the end of the year and at the moment the Council have a total of 227 council houses.

In other years greater progress has been made in the outlying areas, rather than in Rhayader itself but the Dark Lane housing scheme will put an end to this and should clear up all the category V houses in Rhayader.

In such a small rural community there is always a certain antipathy towards the taking of statutory action in the case of housing. The availability of council houses, both in Rhayader and in the districts has almost solved the problem and houses are being closed with the co-operation of the owners themselves.

At the date of writing this report, the number of persons on the housing list totals 94, but it is to be noted that out of these there are 39 from Llandrindod Wells and 27 from outside Radnorshire. Perhaps it would be unfair to comment whether this is a desire to live within the Rhayader Rural District or the result of a shortage of houses in other parts of the County. However, it is obvious that the coming of the small industries has had an effect and people are wanting to move into the district rather than away. The comment is made elsewhere that the raising of the standard of living is resulting in a demand for a better type of house, this, although strongly marked in previous years, is even more strongly marked today and it seems that the slum clearance programme will resolve itself without the need for formal action on the part of the Council.

The Council are continuing their enlightened attitude towards improvement grants and every encouragement is given to owners to improve their property. In the first place this was achieved by the hill farming grants, then the Council approved their first discretionary grant in 1952, followed in 1960 by the first of the standard grants. In all, 172 grants have been approved by the Council, of which 115 have been completed. It is significant that although the smaller grants have only been running for six years against discretionary grants of 14 years, they now out number them by 94 to 78.

The list of grants paid year by year is as follows:-

STANDARD GRANTS

Year	Approved	Number Completed	Actual cost of amenities			Grant paid		
			£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
1960	15	9	2,232.	10.	0.	1,054.	15.	6.
1961	10	9	3,329.	18.	6.	1,290.	0.	0.
1962	19	8	2,561.	17.	11.	950.	13.	1.
1963	9	6	2,740.	17.	5.	812.	13.	11.
1964	19	10	4,882.	4.	0.	1,510.	17.	2.
1965	<u>22</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3,052.</u>	<u>17.</u>	<u>1.</u>	<u>1,289.</u>	<u>0.</u>	<u>4.</u>
	<u>94</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>18,800.</u>	<u>4.</u>	<u>11.</u>	<u>6,908.</u>	<u>0.</u>	<u>0.</u>

The amount of expenditure on the total standard grants is £35,340 with a promised grant total of £12,980.

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

Year	Number Approved	Completed						
		Number	Actual cost of amenities			Grant paid		
			£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
1952	5	4	1,673.	16.	6.	816.	8.	0.
1953	1	1	248.	17.	5.	124.	0.	0.
1954	5	4	1,787.	14.	6.	893.	7.	3.
1955	9	5	1,685.	10.	0.	841.	0.	0.
1956	5	6	1,820.	7.	3.	886.	10.	0.
1957	9	8	4,545.	0.	0.	2,200.	0.	0.
1958	9	4	2,602.	0.	0.	1,264.	0.	0.
1959	5	7	5,133.	0.	0.	2,175.	0.	0.
1960	7	8	5,038.	16.	0.	2,453.	0.	0.
1961	5	2	1,439.	0.	0.	700.	0.	0.
1962	5	5	3,936.	12.	0.	1,735.	0.	0.
1963	5	2	1,642.	0.	0.	743.	0.	0.
1964	3	8	6,123.	18.	6.	2,917.	10.	0.
1965	5	1	1,006.	1.	7.	400.	0.	0.
	<u>78</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>38,682.</u>	<u>13.</u>	<u>9.</u>	<u>18,148.</u>	<u>15.</u>	<u>3.</u>

The amount of approved expenditure on the approved discretionary grants now is £50,557. 11. 7d. with a promised grant total of £22,280.

Apart from the Council grants, indeed before discretionary grants really got under way, much patient work had gone on in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Foods for the improvement of farms. This work has now tailed off and there are very few left but, no doubt, those not included in the hill farming schemes will now take advantage of the Council grants especially in view of the ease of application for standard grants. Although the following figures are an estimate only, our records show that about 130 farms have been investigated and partially improved whilst 78 of these have been completely re-conditioned or replaced entirely by such schemes.

No figures can be given for the costs of the Hill Farming grants as these are not available, but it would be reasonable to suppose that these must be in the region of £50,000 plus. As for R.D.C. grants the cost figures for those approved to date is £35,260, thus the total from all sources is over £80,000. Since the owners costs are invariably over this with the numerous extras somewhere in the region of £200,000 will have been spent in the past 9 to 10 years, on about 300 houses. It can therefore, be stated that a fifth of all houses have, or will receive help and it is suggested that such figures will bear favourable comparison with larger towns.

It is of interest to recall that in a previous report it was stated that the Council had decided not to pay discretionary grants on cottages for holiday use. In view of the new extended standard grant, this decision has been rescinded and in fact it has been shown that, in almost every case, this is born of a desire to lay up an insurance against retirement when they wish to leave the 'hub-bub' of city life for the peace and quiet of the country. Could there be scope here for the encouragement of this idea which would relieve the conurbations for people during their working life, whilst repopulating country areas? For years this has been true of seaside resorts, Eastbourne, Southport, Rhyl etc., and now the idea seems to be spreading inland.

State of Housing

The pace of these improvements and the demand for cottages for holiday use is leading to a slow fall in the number of houses still in category V, and the following figures are a summary of the housing situation to date but these figures do not yet reveal the full impact of the new housing schemes which were only partially completed at the end of the year.

Examination of these tables show that since 1959 when the survey was completed, the number of Grade I houses increased by 256 from 499 to 755, the Grade III's fell by 168 from 451 to 283. This emphasises what has been said before about the impact of the improvement schemes.

For the sake of new members, Grade I is a house with all amenities; Grade II similiar but some small defects; Grade III fit but no amenities; Grade IV unfit; Grade V unfit and incapable of improvement at reasonable cost.

Parish	1	2	3	4	5	Total Houses	No. Occupied
Abbeycwmhir	30	2	23	17	2	74	71
Cefnlllys	11	-	5	8	2	26	25
Llanbadarnfawr	105	2	46	17	8	178	175
Llanfihangel	3	-	8	4	-	15	14
Llansaintffraed Cwmdeuddwr	108	-	31	26	4	169	161
Llanyre	112	5	71	40	-	228	225
Nantmel	80	5	72	43	7	207	220
Rhayader	249	3	69	25	25	371	369
St. Harmon	57	2	58	34	4	155	143
TOTALS	755	19	383	214	52	1,423	1,382
% of Total Houses	53%	1%	27%	15%	4%		

Position in 1959

499	32	451	256	137	1,375	1,307
36%	2%	33%	19%	10%		

There are seven caravans in use for residential purposes, three of these being used in conjunction with the house in the same curtilage.

Council Houses

When the present schemes are completed early in 1966, the Council will own a total of 227 houses. With these occupied, there will still remain a considerable number of applicants. As stated previously some of these are from outside the district and would, if rehoused, still work outside particularly from such sites as Crossgates, Llanyre and Newbridge.

As every new house built in this period of escalating prices, inevitably means increased rents all round, the Council will have to face some agonising decisions; whether to build in the areas mentioned above; to try to offset higher rents by a differential rents scheme; whether such a rents scheme would stimulate people to buy their own houses; and to try to judge what effect possible industrial expansion will have on demand, especially in Rhayader.

In view of the length of time which normally elapses between planning and fruition, these decisions may have to be faced soon and the following points may be relevant:-

- (a) When the present schemes are completed the estimated housing list should be:

Rhayader	23
Llanyre	14
Crossgates	21
Newbridge	9
Total	<u>67</u>

Of these applicants, about 49 will be from people outside the R.D.C. district, but a number will be either natives wishing to return or people who work or have some other affinity with the area. It is suggested that these will be about 14 to 15 so that the total of 'native' applicants would be between 30 - 40;

- (b) The new industries have taken up about 18 of the houses in Rhayader, if these are to expand perhaps 15 - 20 more may be needed.

- (c) Some private sites are to be developed and may relieve the burden slightly.

- (d) In the siting of future projects extra care will have to be taken to consider extraneous influences such as social amenities, public transport, shops etc., for the distance from these is of far greater moment than distance from work. In fact the new industries have stressed that whilst they can easily attract staff all the opposition and all the difficulties have arisen from the wife's angle.

(e) One other consideration may be that of local government reorganisation which could sweep away all barriers of boundaries and spread the burden of housing deficits. This, of course, could be a two edged sword.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The following is an approximation of the number of visits made during the year for the various aspects of public health and includes other duties done by the public health department. The latter includes street cleansing, public conveniences; refuse collection; the management of the Council's Caravan Park and the Weirglodd - the Council's open space in the centre of Rhayader.

<u>Housing</u> -	Allocations, etc.	157
	Slum clearance, unfits, etc.	75
	grants - Hill Farming	29
	" - Discretionary	27
	" - Standard	116

Public Health Acts

-	sewer connections	9
	sanitary defects - houses	16
	other nuisances	6
	caravan/camping site	5
	water supplies	35
	" samples	20
	factories	10
	office, etc.	35

Food Premises

	bakehouses	6
	butchers	4
	grocers	9
	public Houses	9
	cafes	5

573

/continued

/carried forward

573

Refuse Collection	181
Toilets/Street Cleaning	41
Petroleum Acts	7
R.D.C. caravan park	170
Weirglodd - R.D.C. open space etc.	38
Miscellaneous Visits	6
	<u>1,016</u>

Number of complaints 15.

SEWERAGE

The type of sanitary conveniences in use in the various parishes is as follows:-

	W.C. to Sewer	W.C. to Septic Tank	Pail Closets	Total	W.C. to sewer in near future
Abbeycwmhir	-	34	40	74	6
Cefnlllys	-	11	15	26	-
Llanbadarnfawr	82	45	51	178	-
Llanfihangel	-	3	12	15	-
Llansaintffraed					
Cwmdeuddwr	99	39	31	169	-
Llanyre	134	41	53	228	15
Nantmel	5	84	118	207	-
Rhayader	365	2	4	371	2
St. Harmon	13	49	93	155	9
	698	308	417	1,423	32

Percentages 49% 22% 29% - 2%

No. with W.C.'s 997

Percentage with W.C.'s 70%

Although now altered by the Building Regulations, all of these septic tanks are of a design introduced many, many years ago. It was for a simple 300 gallons chambers with subsoil effluent drainage but a filter was sometimes an alternative. A standard drawing was made and copies distributed around builders, etc. It appears to have worked well but with very few exceptions they have never been emptied and although it is stressed that all users should examine them regularly each half year, it is doubtful if this is done.

There may well be instances in the future when these could be in urgent need of maintenance and cleansing and there may arise a need for inspection and perhaps some sort of service on the lines of cesspool emptying.

This could be a heavy burden for one authority to bear and the time may be ripe to liase with neighbouring districts and share this task.

I know that this point has been a problem which my colleagues in adjoining areas appreciate and perhaps Council would be prepared to give a lead in the matter.

By and large, all the larger centres have sewerage schemes and it is difficult to envisage any further schemes. However, like leading a horse to water, the difficulty in the past has been to persuade owners to use the system when installed. The Council are always loath to take legal action, although this has been done in the past and at the moment the bulk of the owners in Pantydwr have yet to be so persuaded.

MEAT INSPECTION

There is no slaughterhouse in the district and meat is brought 'off the hook' from Builth, Llandrindod, and Llanidloes, and farther afield. The inspection stamp is easily recognised and no cases were observed where unstamped meat was on display.

OTHER FOODS

Number and types of food premises in the district are:-

Grocers	..	..	..	30
Butchers	..	..	..	5
Public Houses	..	..	..	15
Hotels	..	..	..	7
Cafes, Restaurants	..	..	..	5
School Canteens	..	..	..	10

Public house sanitary conveniences and washing up facilities have caused a great deal of work over past year. These are not yet 100% satisfactory but it is hoped that the licensing justices will co-operate in the future.

DESTRUCTION OF RATS AND MICE

The one rodent operative is shared by Rhayader and Knighton R.D.C.

This service is very well received by farmers as farm treatments comprise the biggest part of the service. We are only too aware of the dangers of warfarin resistance and a wary eye is kept open for the spread of this problem.

However, it should be stressed that these rats are not immune to all poisons, only to warfarin and could be controlled by the older poisons once used. This cannot be over emphasised, they can be killed by zinc phosphide, etc., but should this become necessary it will inevitably increase the difficulties and cost of the service. Warfarin has been so easy, and its use so widespread that farmers try to 'do it themselves', insufficient bait has been used to save cost and if everyone would leave this to the professionals I am sure that the problem will not get out of hand.

Farmer members are urged to spread this thought amongst their neighbours and with good will and good luck the problem may never arise.

WATER SUPPLIES

The water undertakings are to be taken over in April by the new Water Board. Most of the larger centres are now supplied by mains and it is not thought likely that there will be any major schemes to be installed in the near future.

The Nantmel, Nantglas area should be served in the coming year and this should complete the larger schemes.

Some improvements and extensions will no doubt be made, but in the main there will be many houses served by private supplies for many years to come, indeed perhaps for ever. Sampling is done on request and for new supplies and for some time owners have been urged to install small filters.

Whilst no attempt is made to suggest that these will obviate all danger from polluted water it would seem to go some way along the right lines. Perhaps these remarks could best be read in the same context of those in relation to septic tanks and the need for emptying.

The following table shows the numbers of houses taking water from various sources:

Parish	No. of Houses	Public Source	Private Source	Carried
Abbeycwmhir	74	21	41	12
Cefnlllys	26	7	12	7
Llanbadarnfawr	178	144	25	9
Llanfihangel	15	10	1	4
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr	169	86	62	21
Llanyre	228	181	33	14
Nantmel	207	73	78	56
Rhayader	371	371	-	-
St. Harmon	155	69	56	30
	1,423	962	308	153

Percentages
1965

67%

22%

11%

REFUSE COLLECTION

Collection is made as follows:-

Rhayader, Cwmdeuddwr ——— Twice weekly

Newbridge-on-Wye, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates, Penybont and Nantmel (part) ——— weekly

St. Harmon, Pantydwr, Nantmel (part), Bwlchysarnau, and Abbeycwmhir ——— fortnightly.

In addition some remote country lanes have a collection once in four weeks.

There is thus a disparity in collection and consideration is being given to arrange a weekly collection for the greater part of the district.

This aim is hampered by distance, by the fact that there are now more houses in outlying areas such as Newbridge, Llanyre, Crossgates and Pantydwr; by the ever growing volume and decrease in density of the refuse. The present vehicle is a 10 cu.yd. side loader and it is now found that the original runs cannot be made on one load.

The method of collection at present is 'kerb side'. This is not satisfactory from many aspects, not the least of which is the

difficulties during holiday times and the unsightliness of containers left outside houses. Council have been far sighted enough to appreciate the advantages of paper sacks and a pilot scheme has been started on the new Rhayader estate and at the caravan park. Some short comings in the holders were first experienced with the protected containers. This matter was taken up with the manufacturers and after a meeting with their engineers, a new type fastener was fitted - free of charge.

Many farms are now using their waste plastic sacks to put refuse at main road collecting points. This is being encouraged if only to discourage the practise of putting house refuse in roadside litter bins.

A new tip was started in August, about central for the district and four miles from Rhayader. This is on low boggy ground and should be vastly improved when tipping is complete.

The Council also bought a Bristol bulldozer/excavator to spread refuse and dig cover material. This method is proving highly satisfactory with the only reservation being that the clay ground becomes very soft in wet weather.

An adjoining quarry, also part of the ground purchased should prove a useful source of hardcore for the necessary road ways.

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

There are public conveniences at Rhayader and Cwmdeuddwr, whilst the B.C.W.D. have three toilets in the Elan Valley.

Large enough in winter, the Council's toilets are not altogether satisfactory in peak holiday periods and consideration is being given to augmenting these.

During the past few years, there has been mounting indignation about the fouling and lack of sanitation in layby and roadside halts.

The cost of installing and maintaining these should be heavy burden for small authorities and so far it seems that Central Government have done little more than toy with the problem. It seems a pity that dangers to public health on this sort of scale is allowed to grow until some disaster or public outcry forces action which is often then too late.

PUBLIC CEMETERY

Of the thirty-eight deaths in the year, four were buried in the Council's public cemetery.

PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL

There is a small pool for infants in the Waun Capel Park administered via the Parish Council. Water is pumped from the river. It is not properly treated although assistance has been given to install an improvised chlorination plant.

OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAYS PREMISES

The number of registrations are: Offices - 9; Shops - 18; Catering Premises - 12; There appear to be no major problem involved.

CARAVAN PARK

The R.D.C. caravan park was again a success in spite of adverse weather. So great has been demand that the site will soon have its quota of caravans and there will be need of expansion, especially for tents.

Comments were, without exception most favourable and again this reflects great credit on Council for their foresight and courage.

FACTORIES

Premises	Number on Register	Number		
		Inspections	Written notices	Occupiers prosecuted
1. Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1			
2. Factories not included in 1. which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	23	13		
3. Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises				
Total	24	13		

Particulars (1)	Number in which defects were found		Referred to by H.M. H.M. Inspector Inspector		No. of cases in which prosecu- tions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	(4)	(5)	
Want of cleanliness (S.1). Overcrowding (S.2) Unreasonable tempera- ture (S.3.) Inadequate ventilation (S.4) Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6) Sanitary Conveniences (S.7) (a) Unsufficient (b) Unsuitable or defec- tive (c) Not separate for sexes Other offences against the Act not including offences relating to Outwork.	1				
Total	1				

WEIRGLODD

The 21 acres of land acquired by the Council in the centre of Rhayader has proved to be a boom to the newly born Trekking Association which is proving such an attraction.

This may ultimately be developed as a sports centre and open space and this is now under consideration.

In a small district, with multifarious duties and great distances to other centres it is difficult to keep abreast with new legislation, new techniques etc.

This is appreciated by Council and every opportunity is given to the officers to attend conferences and refresher courses in order to repair this gap. The competition and stimulus created by such gatherings must always enlarge ones scope and ultimately lead to an improvement in the quality of service given.

I am grateful to the Council for affording these facilities.



